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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
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Subject. HOT WEATHER CONDITIONING FOR THE KITCHEN Information from rural electrification specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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There's no question about it. Once you tear the May leaf off the calendar and June days begin to slip by, it's summer. And early June is a good time to put the kitchen in last-minute readiness for hot weather. There will be calls for quick meals...cold drinks the family can fix for themselves, and of course, all the demands of canning and preserving. By mid-summer, when that red line on the thermometer stretches almost to the top, you'll be thankful for everything you do now to save time or steps or to make the kitchen a more comfortable place to work.

As a beginning, take stock of the equipment on hand. If you have any unnecessary items...things you know you aren't going to use this summer...get them all out of the way. Then look to your work surfaces with an eye to saving time and speeding up food preparation. Do you have enough work surface? Are work surfaces conveniently located? Do you have a place near a convenient outlet for using your electric mixer, hotplate or other small appliances? If you can say "yes" to all these questions, then you are on the way toward having a convenient kitchen for summer use.

Of course your range, refrigerator and other equipment should be spotless—or as nearly so as possible. If there are spots on the enamel here and there, try rubbing them lightly with a fine cleaning powder such as whiting. Stubborn spots on drip pans, oven racks and broilers may yield to rubbing with a fine grade of steel wool—double "0". In cleaning enameled equipment, however, be sure to watch for chipped places. Any you find carefully touch up at once with a good

grade of paint to prevent rusting and further chipping.

Now a suggestion or two about your refrigerator. To get the most satisfactory use from the refrigerator this summer, make sure the condenser coils are kept clean and free from dust. On most refrigerators, these coils are located behind or underneath the food chamber. If you have an electric refrigerator, disconnect the motor before cleaning. Then brush off the coils with a long handled brush or clean them with the dust attachment to your vacuum sweeper.

The location of the refrigerator also has an important bearing on its efficiency. First, set it in a cool part of the kitchen, preferably where the sun can't shine on it and, if possible, a few feet away from the range. It should be level, and---if it's operated by electricity, gas or oil---be sure it sits at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches away from the wall so air can circulate around it freely. It's also important to have 8 or 12 inches of open space above the refrigerator for the same reason.

If you want to get the most from your refrigerator this summer, however, plan to store food in it properly. Uncovered dishes permit food to dry out too rapidly, and round or oval dishes waste shelf space. One way to get better food protection--- and relieve crowded shelves besides---is to gather together a set of dishes which are just right for refrigerator use. These should be of various sizes and not too shallow. They should have covers and, if possible, be square or rectangular so they will fit together without wasting shelf space. Most ~~dine~~ stores have a few types of refrigerator dishes as well as moisture-proof covers. Later you may wish to add wide-mouthed coffee jars with screw tops or other food containers from your grocery store to help fill out your set.

Unless you already have a work surface within reach of your refrigerator, arrange to have a small table nearby. In this way you can take out or put in several articles at the same time without opening the door each time and spilling out the cold. And that's important. Frequent opening and closing of the door not

only wastes electricity, fuel or ice, whichever your refrigerator uses, but it also cuts down the effectiveness of the refrigerator in preventing food spoilage. Of course you'll also find the table does away with so many trips back and forth from the refrigerator as well as with fumbling at the door catch when your hands are full of dishes.

And finally--bring out your electric fan. Fans are rare articles these days, so make sure your fan is properly oiled or greased before putting it to work. If yours is a large fan which is packed with grease, it may need to be re-packed. So make a last minute check up to make sure. Smaller fans may need a drop of oil-- no more, since too much oil is as bad as too little. Wipe the fan off carefully and make sure that the connections in the plug at the end of the cord are tight. Then before connecting it up, spin the fan blade with your finger to make sure it hasn't been bent. A blade which catches or even clicks against the guard should be taken to a serviceman for adjustment.

Where you put your fan, of course, depends largely on you and your kitchen. Of course put it out of reach of small children and place it so that no one will trip over the cord. Also make sure that the blades cannot get caught in curtains or drapes.

unless you have a great deal of work surface, it's best to set a fan on a fairly high shelf or cabinet out of reach or have it mounted securely on the wall. If you set the fan on a smooth surface, be sure it does not creep since a fall may damage it beyond repair.

Well, so much for summer comfort and convenience in the kitchen. Since this isn't an ordinary year, you may not be able to spend much time vacationing. But with your kitchen hot-weather conditioned throughout, you can see to it that the hours you spend canning, preserving and getting meals this summer will be as pleasant and easy as you can make them.

